

# The Journal's progress

*ADF Health, Journal of the Australian Defence Health Service*, conceived in 1998 and launched in 1999, is now an established member of the growing international collection of peer-reviewed publications devoted to military medicine. The Editor of this issue, Group Captain Peter Wilkins, has published yet another excellent edition, the tenth to appear.

The articles published in *ADF Health* cover many topics: diving medicine, altitude and aerospace medicine; the impact of landmines, depleted uranium munitions, and thermobaric weapons; the medical aspects of ADF deployments to Bougainville, East Timor and elsewhere; the military role in evacuation of Australians after the Bali bombing; military forensic medicine — the list goes on, and is as diverse as are the demands on health care professionals in the Defence Health Service. An update from the Army Malaria Research Institute and back-page reports from units throughout the Defence Health Service continue to be regular features.

Another continuing strength of *ADF Health* is its historical articles, and history clearly reminds us of the importance of maintaining a dedicated and competent military medical, surgical and nursing capacity. In the New Guinea campaign of World War II, the control of malaria by the Australian-developed drug atabrin was a powerful contributor to victory. Before atabrin, in December 1943, the incidence of malaria in Australian troops in New Guinea (except the Aitape–Wewak area) was a staggering 750 cases per 1000 per year. After atabrin prophylaxis was introduced, this fell to less than 50 cases per 1000 per year in September

1944. During the same period, malaria rates in the Japanese army approached 100%, with mortality at a steady 10%.<sup>1</sup>

In New Guinea, and in every other campaign that history records, the maintenance of the health of the troops was a key determinant of the victory. The prevention of casualties, speedy and safe evacuation of casualties, and effective treatment of illness and injury are the three vital contributions that the health services make to the success of the ADF.

This Journal contributes to the knowledge that is essential to the progress of the Defence Health Service. I thank all my editorial colleagues for their hard work and unstinting support in making the Journal so successful during its first five years. I thank Craig Bingham for his very great assistance and professionalism as the Production Editor. Lastly, and most importantly, I thank all the contributors, reviewers and correspondents for lending their expertise to *ADF Health* and the readers, both within and beyond the Defence Health Service, who have responded to its pages with interest and enjoyment.

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1. Sweeney T. Malaria frontline. Australian Army research during World War Two. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003: 239-240.